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PAGE 01 BUENOS 07543 041501Z
ACTION SCT-00

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-17	ACDE-00	AID-00	ARA-01	A-00	CA-02
	CCO-00	CG-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	COME-00	CTME-00	OASY-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-01	EUR-01
	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	FBO-01	H-01	IMMC-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	INSE-00	JUSE-00	LAB-01	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NEA-01
	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-03	OIS-01	OMB-01	OPR-01
	PA-02	PM-00	PRS-01	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00
	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	DRL-09	G-00	/047W				

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9152
INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM//SCCC//
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 007543

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PTER, PGOV, AR

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PAGE 02 BUENOS 07543 041501Z
SUBJECT: AMIA BOMBING: NEW WAVE OF ARRESTS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON
DATE/CASE ID: 13 MAY 2008 200601030

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REF: BUENOS AIRES 6954 AND PREVIOUS

1. SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED -- DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT -- HANDLE ACCORDINGLY.

2. SUMMARY: IN MULTIPLE RAIDS ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, AND SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, POLICE APPREHENDED MORE THAN A DOZEN NEW SUSPECTS IN THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE JULY 1994 TERRORIST BOMBING OF THE ARGENTINE JEWISH MUTUAL ASSOCIATION (AMIA). DIRECTED BY INVESTIGATING JUDGE JUAN JOSE GALEANO, POLICE OFFICERS FROM THE NEARBY CITY OF QUILMES RAIDED ONE OF THE LARGEST MILITARY BASES IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL, CAMPO DE MAYO, AND TOOK INTO CUSTODY VARIOUS NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL FROM THE 601ST ENGINEERING BATTALION. THEY ARE ACCUSED OF CONDUCTING ILLEGAL ARMS SALES THAT MAY HAVE INCLUDED SELLING THE EXPLOSIVES USED IN THE AMIA BOMBING. SOME ARE SAID TO BE CONNECTED TO THE "CARAPINTADAS", A RIGHT WING ELEMENT IN THE MILITARY THAT STAGED UPRISINGS IN 1987 AND 1989. GALEANO HAS REFRAINED FROM PUBLIC COMMENT WHILE HE IS TAKING STATEMENTS FROM THE NEW SUSPECTS, BUT ONE OF HIS LEAD PROSECUTORS TOLD THE PRESS THAT THESE ARRESTS COULD BE A BREAKTHROUGH TO FINDING THOSE WHO MAY HAVE SUPPORTED THE TERRORISTS HERE IN ARGENTINA, THE SO-CALLED LOCAL CONNECTION. END SUMMARY.

3. JUDGE GALEANO MADE GOOD ON HINTS MADE A WEEK AND A HALF AGO THAT THERE WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS
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PAGE 03 BUENOS 07543 041501Z
IN THE CASE BY THE BEGINNING OF DECEMBER. HE DIRECTED THE DETENTION OF 13 PEOPLE FOR QUESTIONING IN AN ARMS AND EXPLOSIVES SALES RING RUN OUT OF THE IMPORTANT MILITARY BASE AT CAMPO DE MAYO. NINE OF THE SUSPECTS ARE EITHER SERGEANTS OR CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES IN THE 601ST ENGINEERING BATTALION AT THE BASE. AT LEAST ONE OF THE SERGEANTS AND SEVERAL OF THE CIVILIANS ARE REPORTEDLY CONNECTED TO THE RIGHT WING FRINGE GROUP IN THE MILITARY CALLED THE "CARAPINTADAS" - PAINTED FACES. THE CARAPINTADAS WERE BEHIND SHORT UPRISINGS

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AT THE CAMPO DE MAYO IN 1987 AND AT VILLA MARTELLI IN 1989.

4. POLICE ALSO RAIDED HOMES IN THE MERLO AND MORON NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTED TO THE GROUP NOW IN CUSTODY AND FOUND EXPLOSIVES AS WELL AS A SMALL ARSENAL OF AUTOMATIC RIFLES, SHOTGUNS, AND PISTOLS. PROSECUTOR EAMON MULLEN, WHO WORKS FULL TIME ON THE AMIA CASE FOR GALEANO, SAID THAT THE EXPLOSIVES USED IN THE AMIA ATTACK AND THOSE CONFISCATED SATURDAY WERE NOT IDENTICAL, BUT HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE BOMBERS MAY HAVE USED SECONDARY EXPLOSIVE DEVICES IN THE AMIA BOMBING WHICH FIT THE PROFILE OF THE 60 STICKS OF TROTYL FOUND IN THE RAID SATURDAY. OTHER ITEMS CONFISCATED INCLUDED 75 HAND GRENADES AND 7 ROCKET-PROPELLED GRENADES, AS WELL AS FALSE DOCUMENTS AND A KILO OF MARIJUANA.

5. COMMENT: THE ARRESTS, WHICH TOOK PLACE WITH NO PRIOR PUBLICITY, EVEN CAUGHT SOME HIGH RANKING OFFICIALS BY SURPRISE. ON DECEMBER 1, INTERIOR

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 BUENOS 07543 041501Z
MINISTER CORACH MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE HAD HAD NO ADVANCE NOTICE. THE ARRESTS DEMONSTRATE THE AUTONOMY OF GALEANO'S INVESTIGATION AND HIS AUTHORITY TO TAKE WIDE-RANGING ACTION.

6. COMMENT CONTINUED: IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO ASSUME THAT THE NEW SUSPECTS FROM THE CAMPO DE MAYO WILL PROVE TO BE THE MISSING LINK TO THE SO-CALLED LOCAL CONNECTION, AS THE QUILMES CHIEF OF POLICE AND ASSISTANT PROSECUTOR JOSE BARBACIA ARE ASSERTING PUBLICLY. GALEANO AND HIS TEAM WILL HAVE TO PROVE SUCH A LINK TO THE BOMBERS TO KEEP THESE NEW DETAINEES IN JAIL AND TO MOVE THE INVESTIGATION FORWARD; THEY WERE UNABLE TO DO SO WITH THE SELLERS OF THE VAN USED IN THE BOMBING AND THE MEMBERS OF A STOLEN CAR RING (REF). ALTHOUGH PLEASED WITH THE LATEST ARRESTS, JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERS ARE GUARDED IN THEIR OPTIMISM IN FINDING THE IDENTITIES OF ALL INVOLVED. NONE OF THE NEW DETAINEES ARE POLICE FROM BUENOS AIRES

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PROVINCE, WHOM MANY HAVE BEEN INSISTING FOR SOME TIME
WERE THE KEY TO FINDING LOCALS WHO ASSISTED WITH THE
ATTACK. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER WHEN GALEANO MAKES ANY
ANNOUNCEMENTS OR IF THERE IS SOLID EVIDENCE THAT HE IS
NOW ON THE RIGHT TRACK IN THE INVESTIGATION.

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